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THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF VERMONT AND NEW HAMPSHIRE



November Newsletter



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A Note About Our Newsletters

We are in the process of shifting how we communicate within the ABC Vermont and New Hampshire Region! Our plan in the future is to send out two newsletters a month. The first newsletter, which will come out at the beginning of the month, will primarily be on the Mission and the Ministry of the Region. The second newsletter, which will come out in the middle of the month, will be on what's happening in our churches. Those who are getting the newsletter by mail will receive both together once a month. As we make this transition, we will be sending out interim newsletters, like this one.

If you have anything you would like to share in the newsletter, please email Kathleen Blackey at kathleen.blackey@abcvnh.org. We would appreciate your prayers and your patience as we make this transition!

From Rev. Dale Edwards – Region Minister

Things To Ponder

Have you ever had the experience of hearing a statement, and pausing to understand what had just been said? A couple of weeks ago I attended a small group retreat led by George Bullard. There were only five of us with George, all denominational leaders from five different denominations. I was encouraged to join with representatives of the PCUSA, the CBF, Grace Brethren, and the Evangelical Free Church of Canadian. Much was unfolded and unpacked in a short three day time span. One of the statements unpacked was my generation of pastors was the last generation of pastors to begin ministry in a nominal Christian culture. Following generations of church leaders entered ministry in the context of secular culture. I don't believe this makes me irrelevant, in that Christ is always relevant, and the human condition remains the same. But it did cause me to ponder and ruminate over how I relate to younger pastors, a new culture, and being the Church in a new place and time. A sovereign and merciful God is the Lord of history and time.



Part of my prayerful rumination was, "Okay, God, it is a different place and time, what now? How are you working out your plan, how is your kingdom moving forward from this point of human history?" In going back to the original statement that gave me pause there are several observations I would like to share.

- That form of American church life that came into being after World War II is quickly fading away. I find grief in this. It was this world that formed me as a Christian and as a pastor. It was in many ways a much neater and ordered church world than now exists.
- The globalization of the church will mean that global south Christians will have more and more impact on Western Christianity.
- New generations will not become believers except for a compelling reason. I believe this compelling reason is timeless: knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Our old Protestantism will need to re-learn evangelism and discipleship and learning from the global south, a fresh receptivity to the Holy Spirit.
- We will witness new Christian movements grow and prosper in North America. Old denominational structure should adopt a learning posture toward new movements, rather than dismissive or invalidating postures. I found challenging and a little unnerving that non-seminary trained millennial church leaders are the most effective in presenting Christ to other millennials. Are these the indigenous missionaries of our time?
- We must remind ourselves we are first citizens of God's Kingdom spanning across time and history. No political ideology is owed our ultimate allegiance. We and future generations of Western Christians will live out our values in stark contrast to the values of a pre-dominating culture.

So our journey as individuals and a Christ's Body continues within time and history. I am reminded of the opening of Numbers 33, where the people are described as traveling on in stages. Through a wilderness God's presence leads in stages. And the stages, or I might say unfolding chapters, continue for us. The story is Christ's. By grace I am part of the story, but the story is not mine. Should I be the last pastoral product of American Christendom all will be well, in Jesus name.

[Fresh Expressions](#)

The trustees of our Region have decided to partner with an organization called Fresh Expressions. It “is an international movement of missionary disciples cultivating new kinds of church alongside existing congregations to more effectively engage our growing post-Christian society.” For more information about the organization, please look at their website (<http://freshexpressionsus.org/>).

On **June 10th, 2017** there will be a Vision Day, and churches are encouraged to send members to participate. Pastors can get continuing education credits for attending. Details will be forthcoming.

[Helping After Hurricane Matthew in Haiti](#)

Several avenues are available for response to Hurricane Matthew.

To contribute specifically to Haitian relief, you can send monetary support directly to:

Pastor Renaud Dumont
French Speaking Baptist Church
PO Box 261
Manchester, NH 03105-0261

Non-perishable food items are also being collected and can be dropped off at the church:

65 Sagamore Street
Manchester, NH

Church phone: [603-624-4983](tel:603-624-4983)

The cost is \$150.00 to ship one barrel to Haiti.

Monetary gifts for Hurricane Matthew relief can also be sent for One Great Hour of Sharing to the region office.

[Annual Region Offering Update](#)

We are excited that we have raised over \$5,000, since we sent out the letter in late September. A big thank you to all the churches and individuals who have contributed!!

[Annual Gathering 2017](#)

The Annual Gathering will be on May 5th and 6th, 2017 at the Fireside Inn in West Lebanon, NH.

[Loon Mountain Ministry Hosting SFC North America Conference](#)

Loon Mountain Ministry is hosting the SFC (Snowboarders and Skiers for Christ) North America conference November 17th-20th at Loon Mountain. SFC is a grassroots organization that exists to bridge the ski/snowboard culture to Jesus, partnering with the local Church. SFC’s vision is to be the light of Jesus in the ski/snowboard culture. Marcus Corey, the chaplain at Loon Mountain Ministry and also the Northeast regional director for SFC, reports that “115 Jesus loving, snow riding folk are headed our way!!!” Please pray that they’ll have colder temperatures, so they can enjoy snowboarding and skiing during the conference. For more information about the organization, check out their website (sfcusa.org).

Clergy & Ministerial Leaders Monthly Association Meetings

Association	Date	Time	Location	Contact
Central	Fri., Nov. 18	8:15 a.m.	McKenna's Restaurant, New London	Dale Nicholas
Green & White Lakes	Wed., Nov. 16	10:00 a.m.	Littleton Diner	Greg Vigne
Monadnock	Thurs., Nov. 10	8:00 a.m.	The Soda Shoppe, Laconia	Linda Bolton
Northwest	Fri., Nov. 4	8:30 a.m.	1 st Baptist Church, Keene	Charlie Boucher
Southeast	Tues., Nov. 8	9:30 a.m.	1 st Baptist Church, Burlington	David Wood
Southern	Tues., Nov. 8	8:00 a.m.	1 st Baptist Church, Brentwood	Ken Lawrence
Southwest	Tues., Nov. 8	11:30 a.m.	Blake's Restaurant, Manchester	John Cerrato
Women Mini- sterial Leaders	Thurs. Nov. 17	9:30 a.m.	1 st Baptist Church, Manchester Center	Rebecca Sommons
	Mon., Nov. 21	10:00 a.m.	United Baptist Church, Concord	Linda Bolton

Prayer Concerns

- For the family and for Grace River Church as their former youth pastor and current member, Ken LaClair, died suddenly on October 29th.
- For Rev. Isabel Rivera, who had recent surgery.
- For the First Haitian Baptist Church of Manchester as they work towards closing on the sale of their new to them church building.
- For the 13 churches in our Region who are seeking pastors.

First Baptist Church of Burlington, VT Update

The First Baptist Church of Burlington, VT is committed to supporting the New American communities in the northwest corner of Vermont. For more than 30 years they have welcomed Refugees and New Americans from around the world. Today, the congregation is greatly blessed by the Karen Baptist Community who are from Burma and who trace their Baptist heritage back to Adoniram and Ann Judson. In August, First Baptist welcomed the Namuna Nepali Church to their faith community. Worshiping on Saturday mornings, the Namuna Church is made up of mostly new arrivals to Vermont and many are new Christians. Their pastor just arrived from Nepal in August and their worship service is filled with inspiring music and exuberant preaching, all in the Nepali language! New Americans provide so many gifts of faith, perspective, and delicious food! It is a great privilege to minister with them!

New Pastors in Vermont & New Hampshire

Tyler Smith

It's good to be back in Vermont! Having grown up in Middlebury and then moved away to study and start a family, God called me to come back to serve as pastor of Georgia Plain Baptist Church in September, 2015. My wife Meg and I came with two children: Chloe (3) and Asher (22 months), and since then we have been given another son, Ewan (8 months).



The first year has been one of much learning: learning the stories of the people in our congregation, learning how to walk with people through pain, how to preach each Sunday, how to mediate conflict, how to offer vision and leadership to an organization, how to maintain a ministry of prayer, how to balance the needs of family and church. God has been faithful.

Moving back to Vermont as an adult has given me eyes to see my home state in a new way. Vermont is beautiful, Vermonters are wonderful, and Vermont needs the gospel. I believe that God is calling our church to become an attractive counter-culture in our community by showing God's love and the power of the gospel in our worship and in our relationships.

I'm eager to see where God will take us. May his kingdom come in Vermont as it is in heaven.

Mike Hall

Question: What do you get when you cross a West Virginia Hillbilly Baptist with a Pennsylvania German Lutheran?

Answer: A parsonage in New Hampshire!

The "yoked" relationship of The First Baptist Church in Etna and The First Congregational Church in Hanover Center is not unlike the "yoked" marriage relationship our new pastor and his wife. Mike and Susan were raised in different Christian traditions. She and her brother were brought up in the Lutheran Church (ELCA), Reading, PA, where her parents sang in the choir and held various church offices. Mike and his brother and three sisters spent their youth in a Baptist Church (ABC/USA), Weirton, WV, where his parents sang in the choir and held various offices in that church.

They first met in a class gathering where Mike, as the new minister of FBC Reading, PA was teaching a session about Baptist history and polity. When he asked for class participation, Susan, who had been invited by a Baptist friend, offered the Lutheran doctrinal position on the question put to the class. (She was the only person who answered, thus making her especially memorable to Mike.)

Thus began a match made in heaven, by way of Sunday School! Susan kept her roots in the Lutheran liturgy and practice while actively engaging in the life of the local congregation where her new husband had been called to serve. This yoked spiritual relationship comes with them to our setting. A Lutheran and a Baptist sharing a faith journey seems a complement to believers called Congregational and Baptist sharing their congregational journeys.